

Appl. No. : 10/072,537
Filed : February 8, 2002

REMARKS

By way of the present Amendment, Applicants have amended Claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter of Claim 2, and Claim 2 has been cancelled. Applicants have amended Claim 3 to correct its dependency as a result of the cancellation of Claim 2. Applicants have further amended Claim 16 by incorporating the subject matter of Claim 17, and Claim 17 has been cancelled. Claims 18 and 24 have been amended to correct their dependency as a result of canceling Claim 17, and not for reasons of patentability. Claims 31-33 have also been cancelled.

In addition, Applicants have added new Claims 34-64. Accordingly, Claims 1, 3-16, 18-30, and 34-64 are pending for consideration.

Applicants disagree with the propriety of the outstanding prior art rejections. However, in view of the amendments made herein which moot the rejections and facilitate issuance of the allowable claims, Applicants have no occasion to comment on the merits of those rejections.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indicated allowability of Claims 2, 3, 17-25 and 28 if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In reliance upon this indication, Applicants have amended Claim 1 by incorporating the subject matter of Claim 2. Likewise, Applicants have amended Claim 16 by adding the subject matter of Claim 17. Accordingly, Applicants submit that Claims 1 and 16 are in condition for allowance, along with their concomitant dependent claims.

New Claims

Applicants have added new Claims 34-64. Claim 34 is essentially Claim 28 rewritten in independent form including its base claim and intervening Claims 25-27. Claims 35-44 depend from new Claim 34 and are each patentable for at least the reasons Claim 34 is patentable, and are also patentable for the unique combination of features each claim recites.

New claims 45-64 depend either directly or indirectly from allowable Claim 1, and are believed to be in condition for allowance for at least this reason. No new matter has been added.

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CONCLUSION

Based upon the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants believe pending Claims 1, 3-16, 18-30, and 34-64 are in condition for allowance and respectfully requests an indication of the same.

Applicants have endeavored to respond to each of the issues raised by the Examiner. However, if there remain any unresolved issues that could be resolved via a telephone conference, Applicants invite the Examiner to initiate the same with Applicants' representative at the telephone number shown below. Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for any extensions of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

KNOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & BEAR, LLP

Dated: 3/24/04

By:

Gerard von Hoffmann
Gerard von Hoffmann
Registration No. 33,043
Attorney of Record
Customer No. 20,995
(949) 760-0404

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